

SEATTLE'S COMMERCIAL ZONES

IMPORTANT NOTE: Changes will be forthcoming to Commercial Zones in 2006. Also, some areas have neighborhood-specific regulations that are not reflected here. Please consult with DPD staff for individual projects.

THIS ZONING CHART IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

General standards are shown. Please refer to the Land Use Code for exceptions and specific regulations. Due to the complexity of the code, zoning questions cannot be answered by phone. If you have questions about commercial zoning, please visit the Department of Planning and Development, located on the 20th floor of Seattle Municipal Tower at 700 Fifth Ave.

Regulations common to all commercial zones

Open Space

5% of lot area for new construction must be landscaped; none for renovations.

Landscaping

Planting strips and/or screening required along street in front of parking areas and blank facades, and between parking lots and abutting residential lots; street trees required for most development.

Parking Quantity

Depends on land use. Required amounts for all land uses are listed in Chart A, section 23.54.015 of the Land Use Code.

Height Limits

Applied independent of zone designations. Height limits may be 30', 40', 65', 85', 125', 160' dependent on locational criteria. Refer to the Zoning Map for site-specific limits. Changes to height limits require a rezone.

Setbacks

Minimum setbacks are only required along property lines that abut residential zoning. A maximum front setback is applied in Pedestrian (P) designated zones.

Transparency

Blank facades (without windows) are limited in length when across from residential zones.

Design Review

Commercial projects which undergo Design Review may be granted departures from certain development standards.



City of Seattle
Department of Planning
& Development
Diane Sugimura, Director
Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Definitions

Mixed Use

Refers to combining non-residential use and residential use in the same project. Residential use in mixed use projects is permitted outright with no density limit in all commercial zones except C2.

Single-Purpose Residential

Refers to a project where residential is the only use, such as an apartment building. Single-purpose residential structures are permitted by conditional use in some commercial zones. However, single purpose residential structures are prohibited in commercial zones with height limits of 85' or higher.

Conditional Use

When a land use is permitted only under certain conditions specified in the Land Use Code, as opposed to being permitted outright, a more detailed, appealable approval process is followed.

Residential Density

Measured in dwelling units per square foot of lot area, e.g. 1/1200. In the NC zones, density limits will be increased through an adopted Neighborhood Plan.

Floor Area Ratio

Applied by height limit and use mix only to structures above 65' in height as per the FAR Chart below. An FAR of 4.5 would permit a building with gross floor area equal to 4.5 times the lot area.

FAR CHART

		Height Limit Designations		
		65' to 85'	125'	160'
Mixed-use structure total	6.0	6.0	7.0	
Any single use within a mixed-use structure	4.5	5.0	5.0	
Single-purpose structure	4.5	5.0	5.0	

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NC1

Neighborhood Commercial 1

A small pedestrian-oriented shopping area composed primarily of small businesses providing convenience retail sales and services within walking distance of an adjoining residential neighborhood.



Typical Land Uses
Convenience store, hair salon, doctor's office, apartments.

Building Types
Single purpose commercial structures, multistory mixed use structures with commercial along street front, and some multistory residential structures.

Size of Commercial Use
Maximum 4,000 sf for most uses; 10,000 sf for multipurpose convenience stores and medical offices.

FAR See FAR Chart, reverse side of page.

Height Limit
Variable, see Zoning Map.

Parking Quantity
Depends on land use, e.g. a 4,000 sf retail store would require 4 parking spaces (none, if in a P zone).

Parking Location
At the rear or side of a building, built within the structure, or off-site within 800'. Parking between a building and a street is usually not allowed.

Parking Access
May be from the front or a side street, or from the alley if feasible; subject to curbcut standards.

MIXED USE STANDARDS
Space occupying 80% of a building's ground floor frontage to depth of 30' required for non-residential uses. Ground-floor height must be min. 13', while 4' of additional building height is allowed in 30' and 40' height areas. Residential density is unlimited.

SINGLE-PURPOSE RESIDENTIAL
Allowed only as a conditional use, unless an adopted Neighborhood Plan permits it outright. Mixed use standards apply to a ground-floor residential space which may convert to commercial use in the future. Residential density is limited to 1/1600, which will increase with an adopted Neighborhood Plan.

NC2

Neighborhood Commercial 2

A pedestrian-oriented shopping area composed of small to medium sized businesses providing a full range of household and personal goods and services to a surrounding neighborhood.



Typical Land Uses
Small grocery store, coffee shop, video outlet, apartments.

Building Types
Single purpose commercial structures, multistory mixed use structures with commercial along street front, and some multistory residential structures.

Size of Commercial Use
Maximum 15,000 sf for most uses; 50,000 sf for multipurpose convenience stores.

FAR
See FAR Chart, reverse side of page.

Height Limit
Variable, see Zoning Map.

Parking Quantity
Depends on land use, e.g. a 5,000 sf retail store would require 7 parking spaces (none, if in a P zone).

Parking Location
Same as NC1.

Parking Access
Same as NC1.

MIXED USE STANDARDS
Same as NC1.

SINGLE-PURPOSE RESIDENTIAL
Same as NC1, except residential density is 1/1200 at 30' & 40' height, and 1/800 at 65' height, which will increase with an adopted Neighborhood Plan.



NC3

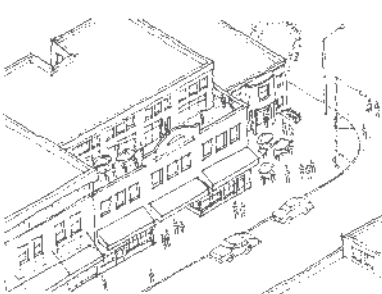
Neighborhood Commercial 3

A pedestrian-oriented shopping district serving both surrounding neighborhood and larger community or citywide clientele with a wide range of retail businesses as well as offices and business support services.

Typical Land Uses
Food supermarket, restaurant/bar, clothing shops, apartments.

Building Types
Single purpose commercial structures, multistory mixed use structures with commercial along street front, and some multistory residential structures.

Size of Commercial Use
No size limits for most uses; 10,000 - 25,000 sf for light manufacturing and warehouse uses.



FAR See FAR Chart, reverse side of page.

Height Limit
Variable, see Zoning Map.

Parking Quantity
Depends on land use, e.g. a 10,000 sf grocery store would require 21 parking spaces (14 in a P2 zone, none in a P1 zone).

Parking Location Same as NC1.

Parking Access Same as NC1.

MIXED USE STANDARDS
Same as NC1.

SINGLE-PURPOSE RESIDENTIAL
Same as NC1. Not allowed above 65' height. Residential density limits are 1/1200 at 30' & 40' height, and 1/800 at 65' height, which will increase with an adopted Neighborhood Plan.



Illustration: Val Thomas

NC/R

Neighborhood Commercial/Residential

NC2/R and NC3/R function as NC2 and NC3 zones while maintaining existing residential uses and/or promoting increased residential development. NC/R zones may only be designated through adoption of a Neighborhood Plan.

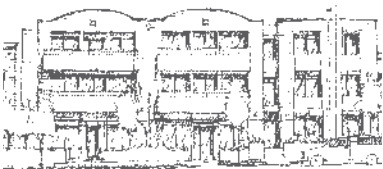
Building Types
Moderate density residential development in multistory structures with or without streetfront commercial; limited single purpose commercial structures.

Height Limit
Variable, see Zoning Map.

Commercial Use FAR
Total commercial space restricted to 1.0 FAR or to 20,000 sf, whichever is greater, unless NC/R mixed use standards are met.

MIXED USE STANDARDS
Commercial Use FAR
Commercial space restrictions increase to 1.5 FAR for 30' & 40' height limits, and to 2.0 FAR for 65'+ height limits, when minimum 35% of the gross floor area of a building is residential. Other FAR limits still apply; see FAR Chart, reverse side of page.

Ground-floor requirements
Mixed use buildings not subject to ground-level space depth and ceiling height requirements described under NC1, except the 80% frontage requirement still applies.



SINGLE-PURPOSE RESIDENTIAL
Allowed in all height zones as a conditional use, unless an adopted Neighborhood Plan permits it outright. Mixed use standards do not apply to the ground-floor space. Residential density is unlimited, but FAR limits for single-purpose structures apply. See FAR Chart, reverse side of page.

C1

Commercial 1

An auto-oriented, primarily retail-service commercial area, serving surrounding neighborhoods and larger community or citywide clientele with a wide range of commercial services, including retail, offices and business support services; residential use is also permitted.



Typical Land Uses
Large supermarket, building supply & household goods, auto sales and repairs.

Building Types
Large lots provide for a variety of building types and site layouts including one-story commercial structures with large areas of surface parking and multistory buildings with commercial or residential uses.

Size of Commercial Use
No size limits for most uses; 15,000 - 40,000 sf for general manufacturing and warehouse uses; 35,000 sf or size of lot, whichever is greater, for office uses (possible exception if in urban village).

FAR
See FAR Chart, reverse side of page.

Height Limit
Variable, see Zoning Map.

Parking Quantity
Depends on land use, e.g. a 30,000 sf supermarket would require 79 parking spaces.

Parking Location No restrictions.

Parking Access May be from the front or a side street, or from the alley if feasible; subject to curbcut standards.

MIXED USE STANDARDS Same as NC1.

SINGLE-PURPOSE RESIDENTIAL
Same as NC1. Not allowed above 65' height. Residential density limits are the same as in NC2, but will change to 1/1000 for all height zones after adoption of a Neighborhood Plan.

C2

Commercial 2

An auto-oriented, primarily non-retail commercial area, serving a citywide function with a wide range of commercial services and employment opportunities in small to large businesses, including offices, business support services, light manufacturing and warehouse uses; residential use is generally not allowed, but exceptions meeting specific criteria may be considered through a conditional use process.

Typical Land Uses
Office building, wholesale warehouse, biotech research & manufacturing.

Building Types
Large lots provide for a variety of building types and site layouts, including one-story warehouse structures with large paved areas, and multistory buildings with offices or research and development labs.

Size of Commercial Use
No size limits for most uses; 35,000 sf or size of lot, whichever is greater, for office uses (possible exemption if in urban village).

FAR
See FAR Chart, reverse side of page.



Height Limit
Variable, see Zoning Map.

Parking Quantity
Depends on land use, e.g. a 40,000 sf office building would require 40 spaces.

Parking Location
No restrictions.

Parking Access
Same as C1.

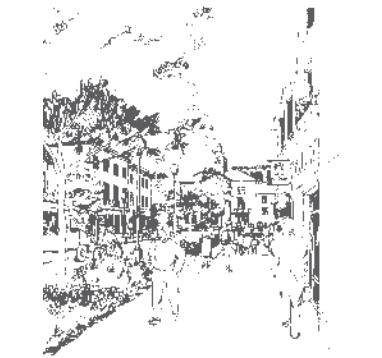
MIXED USE STANDARDS
Same as NC1, except that residential requires conditional use approval even when provided as part of a mixed use building.

SINGLE-PURPOSE RESIDENTIAL
Same as NC1.

P1, P2

Pedestrian-Designated Zones 1 & 2

P1 and P2 designations are applied to NC zones along pedestrian-oriented commercial streets.



P1 preserves and encourages an intensely retail and pedestrian-oriented shopping district where non-auto modes of transportation, both to and within the district, are strongly favored.

P2 preserves and encourages a pedestrian-oriented shopping area where non-auto modes of transportation within the area are strongly favored, but where lower surrounding residential densities are less supportive of non-auto modes.

Street Level Uses along the pedestrian street front are restricted to pedestrian-friendly commercial uses that have the potential to animate the sidewalk environment, such as retail, food vending and personal services. Drive-in or drive-thru businesses are prohibited.

Front Setback
Max. 10', for portion with required street level uses only.

Parking Quantity
Parking requirements are reduced for pedestrian-friendly commercial uses, especially for retail uses. (e.g. parking is not required for a 25,000 sf store in an NC3/P1 zone, while in an NC3/P2 zone, a 5,000 sf store is exempt).

Parking Location
NC standards apply except that in P1 zones parking is prohibited along the lot line fronting the pedestrian street.

Parking Access
Must be from alley or side street if available, otherwise a two-way curbcut on the principal pedestrian street is allowed.

